

Notable Discovery of Coofnage.

Now daily practised by sundry lewd persons, called Connie-catchers, and Crosse-biters.

Plainely laying open those pernicious sleights that hath brought many ignorant men to confusion.

Written for the general benefit of all Gentlemen, Citizens, Apprentises, Country Farmers and yeomen, that may hap to fall into the company of such coofening companions.

With a delightful discourse of the coofnage of Colliers.

Nascitur pro patria.

By R. Greene, Maister of Arts.



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TO THE YONG GENT-
lemen, Marchants, Apprentifes,
Farmers, and plain Countrey-men
Health.



Diogenes, Gentlemen, from a counterfeit Corner of money, became a currant corrector of manners, as absolute in the one, as dissolute in the other: time refineth mens affects, and their humors grow different by the distinction of age. Poore Ouid that amorously writ in his youth the art of loue, complained in his exile amongst the Getes of his wanton follies. And Socrates age was vertuous though his prime was licentious. So, Gentlemen, my younger yeeres had uncertaine thoughtes, but now my ripe daies cal on to repentant deedes, and I sorrow as much to see others wilful, as I delighted once to be wanton. The odd mad-caps I haue beene mate too, not as a companion, but as a spie to haue an insight into their knaueries, that seeing their traines I might eschew their snares: those mad fellowes I learned at last to loath, by their owne gracelesse villenies, and what I saw in them to their confusion, I can forewarne in others to my countreies commodity. None could decipher Tyranisme better then Aristippus, not that his nature was cruell, but that he was nurtured with Dionisius: The simple swaine that cuts the Lapidaries stones, can distinguish a Ruby from a Diamond onely by his labour: though I haue not practised their deceits, yet conuersing by fortune, and talking vpon purpose with such copes-mates, hath geuen mee light into their conceiptes, and I can decipher their qualities, though I utterly mislike

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of their practises. To be brieft Gentleman, I haue seen the world
and roured it, though not with trauell, yet with experience, and
I crie out with Salomon, Omnia sub sole vanitas. I haue smy-
led with the Italian, and worne the vipers head in my hand, and
yet stopt his venome. I haue eaten Spanishe Mirabolanes, and
yet am nothing the more metamorphosed. Fraunce, Germa-
nie, Poland, Denmarke, I knowe them all, yet not affected to any
in the fourme of my life; onelie I am English borne, and I haue
English thoughts, not a deuill incarnate because I am Italianate,
but hating the pride of Italie, because I know their peeuishnes: yet
in all these Countreyes where I haue trauelled, I haue not seene
more excesse of vanitie then wee Englishe men practise through
vain glory: for as our wits be as ripe as any, so our willes are more
ready then they all, to put in effect any of their licentious abuses:
yet amongst the rest, letting ordinary sinnes passe, because custome
hath almost made them a law, I will onely speake of two such no-
table abuses, which the practitioners of the shadow with the name
of Arts, as neuer haue been heard of in any age before. The first
and chiefe, is called the Art of Cunny catching; the second,
the Arte of Crof-biting; two such pestilent and preiudiciall
practises, as of late haue been the ruine of infinite persons, and the
subuersion and ouerthrow of many Marchaunts. Farmers, and
honest minded yeomen. The first is a deceit at Cardes, which
growing by enormitie into a Coosenage, is able to drawe (by the
subtill shewe thereof) a man of great iudgement to consent to his
owne confusion. Yet Gentlemen when you shall reade this booke,
written faithfullie to discouer these coosening practises, thinke I
goe not about to disproue or disalow the most auncient and honest
pastime or recreation of Card play, for thus much I know by rea-
ding: When the Cittie of Thebes was besieged by them of Lace-
demonia, being girt within strong fenced walles, and hauing
men enough, and able to rebat the enemye, they found no inconue-
nience of force to breed their ensuing bane, but famine, in that

when victuals waxed scant, hunger would either make them yeeld by a fainting composition, or a miserable death. Whereuppon to wearie the foe with wintering at the sledge, the Thebanes deuised this pollicie, they found out the Method of Cards and Dice, and so busied their braines with the pleasantnesse of that new inuention, passing away the time with strange recreations and pastimes, beguyting hunger with the delight of the new sports, and eating but euery third day, and playing two, so their frugal sparing of victuals kept them from famine, the Cittie from sacking, and rayssed the foe from a mortall sledge. Thus was the use of Cards and Dice first inuented, and since amongst Princes highly esteemed, and allowed in all common-wealths, as a necessarie recreation for the mind: But as in time and malice of mans nature hatcheth abuse, so good things by ill wits are wrested to the worse, and so in Cardes: for from an honest recreation, it is grown to a preiudiciall practise, and most high degree of coosenage, as shalbe discouered in my Art of Cuny-catching, for not onely simple swaine: , whose wits is in their hands, but yoong Gentlemen, and Marchants, are all caught like Cunnies in the hay, and so led like lambs to their confusion.

The poore man that commeth to the Tearme to trie his right, and layeth his land to morgadge to gette some Crownes in his purse to see his Lawyer, is drawn in by these diuelish Cunny-catchers, that at one cut at Cardes looseth all his moncy, by which meanes, he, his wife and children, is brought to utter ruine and miserie. The poore Prentice, whose honest minde aymeth only at his Maisters profites, by these pestilent vipers of the common-wealth, is smoothly intised to the hazard of this game at Cardes, and robd of his Maisters money, which forceth him oft times eyther to run away, or banckrout all, to the ouerthrow of some honest and wealtby Cittizen. Seeing then such a daungerous enormity groweth by them, to the discredite of the estate of England, I would wishe the Iustices appoynted as seuerer Censors of such fatal mischiefs,

chiefes, to shewe themselves patres patriæ, by weeding out such worms as eat away the sappe of the Tree, and rooting this base degree of Cooseners out of so peaceable and prosperous a countrey, for of all diuelish practises this is the most preiudicial. The high Lawyer that challengeth a purse by the high way side, the foist, the nip, the stale, the snap, I meane the pick-pockets and cut-purses are nothing so dangerous to meete with all, as these Cocsening Cunny-catchers. The Chetors that with their false Dice make a hande, & strike in at Hazard or Passage with their Dice of aduantage, are nothing so dangerous as these base minded Caterpillers. For they haue their vies and their reuies vppon the poore Cunnies backe, till they so ferrette beate him, that they leaue him neither haire on his skin, nor hole to harbour in. There was before this many yeeres agoe, a practise put in vse by such shifting companions, which was called the Barnards Law, wherein as in the Arte of Cunny-catching, four persons were required to perfourm their coosning commodity. The Taker vp, the Verser, the Barnard and the Rutter, and the manner of it indeed was thus. The Taker vp seemeth a skilful man in al things, who hath by long trauell learned without Booke a thousand pollicies to insinuate himselfe into a mans acquaintance: Talke of matters in law, he hath plenty of Casis at his fingers ends, and he hath secne, and tryed, and ruled in the Kinges Courtes: Speake of grasing and husbandry, no man knoweth more shires then hee, nor better which way to raise a gainefull commodity, and how the abuses and ouerture of prices might be redressed. Finally, enter into what discourse they list, were it into a Brormemans facultie, hee knoweth what gaines they haue for olde Bootes and Shooes: Yea, and it shall scape him hardly, but that ere your talke breake off, hee will be your Countrey man at least, and peraduenture either of kinne, aly, or some stale sib to you, if your reach farre surmount not his. In case hee bring to passe that you be glad of his acquaintance, then doeth hee carry you to the Tauernes, and with him goes the Verser, a man

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of more worshippe then the Taker up, and hee hath the counte-
naunce of a landed man. As they are set, comes in the Barnard
stumbling into your companie, like some aged Farmer of the
Countrey, a straunger vnto you all, that had beene at some mar-
ket Towne therabout, buying and selling, and there tipled so much
Malmesie, that he had neuer a ready woord in his mouth, and
is so carelesse of his money, that out he throweth some fortie An-
gels on the boords end, and standing somewhat aloofe, calleth for
a pint of wine; and saith: Masters, I am somewhat bold with
you; I pray you be not griued if I drinke my drinke by you: and
thus ministers such idle drunken talke, that the Verser who coun-
terfeited the landed man, comes and drawes more neare to the
plaine honest dealing man, and prayeth him to call the Barnard
more neare to laugh at his follie. Betweene them two the matter
shal be so workem. inly conueied and finely argued, that out com-
meth an old paire of Cardes, whereat the Barnard teacheth the
Verser a new game, that hee saies cost him for the learning two
pots of Ale not two houres agoe, the first wager is drinke, the next
two pence or a groat, and lastly to be brieft they vse the matter so,
that he that were an hundred yeere olde, and neuer played in his
life for a penny, cannot refuse to be the Versers halfe, and conse-
quently at one game at Cardes, hee looseth all they play for, be it a
hundred pound. And if perhaps when the mony is lost (to vse
their word of Arte) the poore Countrey man beginne to smoake
them, and sweares the drounken knaue shall not gette his money
so, then standeth the Rutter at the doore and draweth his sword
and picketh a quarrell at his owne shadowe, if he lacke an Osler
or a Tapster or some other to brabble with, that while the streete
and company gather to the fray, as the manner is, the Barnard
steales away with all the coine, and gets him to one blinde Ta-
uerne or other, where these Cooseners had appointed to meete.

Thus Gentlemen I haue glaunst at the Barnardes Lawe,
which though you may perceiue it to bee a preiudiciall insinua-

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ting coosenage, yet is the Art of Cunny-catching so farre beyond it in subtiltie, as the deuill is more honest then the holiest Angell: for so vnlikelie is it for the poore Cunny to leese, that might he pawn his stake to a pound, he would lay it that he cannot be cros-bitten in the cut at cards, as you shall perceiue by my present discoverie. Yet gentlemen am I sore threatned by the hacksters of that filthie facultie, that if I sette their practises in print, they will cut off that hande that writes the Pamphlet, but how I feare their brauadoes, you shall perceiue by my plaine painting out of them, yea, so little doe I esteeme such base minded braggardes, that were it not I hope of their amendment, I would in a schedule set downe the names of such coosening Cunny-catchers. Well, leauing them and their course of life to the honourable and the worshipfull of the lande, to be censors of with iustice, haue about for a blowe at the Art of Cros-biting: I meane not Cros biters at dice, when the Chetor with a langret, cut contrarie to the vantage, will cros-bite a bard cater tray: Nor I meane not when a broaking knane cros-biteth a Gentleman with a bad commoditie: nor when the Foyst, the pick-pockets (sir reuerence I meane) is cros-bitien by the Snap, and so smoakt for his purchase: nor when the Nip, which the common people call a Cut-purse, hath a cros-bite by some brybing officer, who threatening to carry him to prison, takes away all the mony, and lets him slippe without any punishment: But I meane a more dishonourable Arte, when a base Roague, eyther keepeth a whore as his friende, or marries one to be his mainteyner, and with her not onely cros-bites men of good calling, but especially poore ignoraunt countrey Farmers, who God wotte be by them ledde like sheep to the slaughter. Thus gentle Readers, haue I giuen you a light in brieft, what I meane to prosecute at large, and so with an humble sute to all Iustices, that they will seeke to root out these two reagish Artes, I commit you to the Almighty.

Yours Rob. Greene.

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Here be requisit effectually to ad the Art of Cony-catching thre severall parties: the Setter, the Werser, and the Wernackle. The nature of the Setter, is to draw any person familiarly to drinke with him, which person they call the Conie, & their methode is according to the man they aime at: if a Gentleman, Marchant, or Apprentice, the Conie is the moze easily caught, in that they are soone induced to plaie, and therefore I omit the circumstance which they vse in catching of them. And so because the poore countrie farmer or Peoman is the marke which they most of all shoote at, who they knowe comes

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not emptie to the Terme, I will discover the means they put in practise to bring in some honest, simple & ignorant men to their purpose. The Conny-catchers, appparelled like honest ciuil gentlemen, or good fellows, with a smooth face, as if butter would not melt in their mouthes, after dinner when the clients are come from Westminster hal and are at leasure to walke by and downe Paules, Fleet-street, Holbozne, the strond, and such common haunted places, where these cosning companions attend onely to spie out a praiſe: who as soone as they see a plaine cuntry fellow well and cleanly appparelled, either in a coat of home spun russet, or of freze, as the time requires, and a side pouch at his side, there is a connie, saith one. At that word out flies the Setter, and ouertaking the man, begins to salute him thus: Sir, God saue you, you are welcom to London, how doth all our good friends in the countrie, I hope they be all in health? The countrie man seeing a man so curteous he knowes not, halfe in a browne studie at this strange salutation, perhaps makes him this aunswere. Sir, all our friends in the countrie are well thanks bee to God, but truly I know you not, you must pardon me. Why sir, saith the setter, getting by his tong what country man hee is, are you not such a cuntry man, if he say yes, then he creeps vpon him closely: if he say no, the straight the setter comes ouer him thus: In good sooth sir, I know you by your face & haue bin in your companie before, I praiſe you (if without offence) let me craue your name, and the place of your abode. The simple man straight tels him where he dwels his name, and who be his next neighbors, and what Gentlemen dwell about him. After he hath learned all of him, then he comes ouer his fallowes kindly: sir, though I haue bin somewhat bold to be inquisitiue of your name, yet holde me excused, for I tooke you for a friend of mine, but since by mistaking I haue made you slacke your busines, wele drinke a quart of wine, or a pot of Ale together: if the fole be so readie as to go, then the Connie is caught: but if he
smack

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smack the setter, and smells a rat by his clawing, and will not drinke with him, then away goes the setter, and discourteth to the verser the name of the man, the parish he dwells in, and what gentlemen are his near neighbours, with that away goes he, & crossing the man at some turning meets him full in the face, and greetes him thus.

What Goodman Barton, how fare al our friends about you? you are well met, I haue the wine for you, you are welcome to town. The poore countryman hearing himselfe named by a man he knows not, marvels, & answers that he knowes him not, and craves pardon. For me Goodman Barton, haue you forgot me? why I am such a mans kinsman, your neighbo: not far off: how both this or that good gentleman my friend: good Lord that I should be out of your remembrance, I haue bene at your house diuers times. Indeede, sir, saith the farmer, are you such a mans kinsman, surely sir if you had not chalenged acquaintance of me, I should neuer haue knowen you, I haue clean forgot you, but I know the good gentleman your cosin well, he is my very good neighbo: & for his sake saith y^e verser, wel drinke afoze we part, haply the man thanks him, and to the wine or ale they goe, then ere they part, they make him a cony, & so feret-claw him at cardes, y^e they leaue him as bare of mony, as an ape of a taile: thus haue the filthie felows their subtle fetches to draw on poore men to fall into their cosening practises: thus like consuming moths of the common welth, they pray vpon the ignorance of such plain soules, as measure al by their owne honesty, not regarding either conscience, or the fatal reuenge thats threatened for such idle & licentious persons, but do imploy all their wits to ouerthrow such as with their bandy thrifte satisfie their hartie thirst: they preferring cosenage befoze labo:, and chusing an idle practise befoze any honest form of good liuing. Wel, to y^e method again of taking vp their conies. If the poore countreyman smoake them still, and wil not stoupe vnto either of their lures: then one, either

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The verser, or the setter, or some of their crue, for there is a general fraternity betwixt them, steppeth befoze the Conny as he goeth, and letteth drop twelue pence in the high way, that of force the conny must see it. The countreyman spying the shilling, maketh not saintie, for *quis nisi mentis inops oblatum respicit aurum*, but stoupeh very mannerlie and taketh it vp: then one of the conny catchers behind crieth halfe part, and so chalengeth halfe of his finding. The countriman content, offreth to change the mony. Nay saith friend saith the verser, tis ill luck to keep founre mony, wele go spend it in a pottle of wine, or in a breakfast, dinner or supper, as the time of day require: If the conny say he wil not, then answeres the verser, spende my part: if stil the conny refuse, he taketh halfe and away, if they spy the countriman to be of a hauing and conetous mind, then haue they a farther policie to draw him on: another that knoweth the place of his abode, meeteth him and saith Sir, wel met, I haue run hastily to ouertake you, I pray you dwel you not in Darbithire, in such a village: yes marry doe I friend saith the conny, then replies the verser, fruely sir I haue a sute to you, I am going out of town, & must send a letter to the parson of your parish, you shall not refuse to do a stranger such a fauor as to cary it him, haply, as men may in time meet, it may lie in my lot to do you as good a turn, and for your paines I wil giue you xii. pence. The pooz conny in meer simplicity saith, sir, I'll do so much for you with al my hart, where is your letter? I haue it not good sir redy wzitten, but may I entreate you to step into some tauern or alehouse, wele drinke the while, and I wil wzite but a line or two: at this the conny stoupes, and for greedines of the mony, and vpon courtesie goes with the setter vnto the tauerne. As they walke they meet the verser, and then they all thre goe into the tauern together.

See Gentlemen what great logicians these conny-catchers be, that haue such rethozicall perswasions to induce the

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the poore countrie man to his confusion, and what varietie
of villany they haue to strip the poore farmer of his mo-
ney. Well, I imagine the conny is in the tauern, then sits
down the verser, and saith to the setter, what sirrha, wilt
thou geae mee a quart of wine, or shall I geue thee one?
wele drink a pint saith the setter, & play a game at cards
for it, respecting more the sport then the losse: content quod.
the verser, go cal for a paire, and while he is gone to fetch
the, he saith to the conny, you shal see me fetch ouer my yong
master for a quart of wine finely, but this you must do for
me, when I cut the cards, as I wil not cut aboue fife off,
mark then of al the greatest pack which is vndermost, &
when I bid you cal a card for me, name that, and you shal
see wele make him pay for a quart of wine straight, truly
saith the conny, I am no great player at cards, and I do not
wel vnderstand your meaning, why, saith he, it is thus: I
wil play at mum-chance, or decoy, that hee shal shuffle,
the cards, and I wil cut: now eyther of vs must call a
card, you shal call for me, and he for himselfe, and whose
card comes first wins, therfore when I haue cut y cards,
then mark the nethermost of the greatest heap, that I set
vpon the cards which I cut off, & always cal that for me.
Now saith the conny, I vnderstand you, let mee alone, I
warrant I le sit your turne, with that in comes the setter
with his cards, and asketh at what game they shal play,
why saith the verser, at a new game caued mum-chance,
that hath no policie nor knaquerie, but plain as a pike staf,
you shal shuffle and I le cut, you shal cal a carde, and this
honest man, a stranger almost to vs both, shal cal another
for me, and which of our cards comes first, shal win, contēt.
saith the setter, for thats but meer hazard, & so he shuffles
the cards, and the verser cuts of some four cards, and then
taking vp the heape to set vpon them, geueth the conny a
glance of the bottom card of that heap, and saith, now sir,
call for me. The conny to blind the setters eyes, asketh as
though he were not made priuy to the game, what shal I

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cut: what card saith the verser: why what you wil, either hart, spade, club or diamond, cote-card or other. **W**is it so, saith the conny: why then you shal haue the four of harts which was the card he had a glaunce of, and saith the setter (holding the cards in his hand, and turning vp the vppermost card, as if hee knew not wel the game) **I**le haue the knaue of trumpes. **N**ay saith the verser, there is no trump, you may cal what card you wil: then saith he, **I**le haue the ten of spades, with that he drawes, and the four of harts comes first: wel saith the setter, tis but hazard, mine might haue come as wel as yours, fise is vp, **I** fear not to set: so they shuffle and cut, but the verser winnes. **W**ell saith the setter, no butter wil cleaue on my bread, what, not one draught among fise: drawe, a freshe pinte, **I**le haue another bout with you: but sir **I** beleeeue, saith he to the conny, you see some card, that it goes so cros on my side. **I** saith the conny, nay **I** hope you think not so of me, tis but hazard and chaunce, for **I** am but a meere stranger vnto the game, as **I** am an honest man **I** neuer saw it befoze.

Thus this simple conny closeth vp smoothly to take the versers part, only for greedines to haue him winne the wine: wel answeres the setter, then **I**le haue one call moze, and to it they go, but he loseth all, and beginneth to chafe in this maner: were it not quoth he, that **I** care not for a quart of wine, **I** could sweare as many othes for anger, as there be hairens on my head, why shoulde not my luck be as good as yours, and fortune fauor me as wel as you: what, not one cald card in ten cuttes, **I**le forswear the game for euer. **W**hat, chafe not man, saith the verser, seeing we haue your quart of wine. **I**le shew you the game, and with that discourseth all to him, as if he knew it not. **T**he setter, as simply as if the knaue were ignorant, saith, **I** marry, **I** thinke so, you must needes winne, whē he knowes what card to cal, **I** might haue plaid long enough befoze **I** had got a set. **C**ruely saies the conny, tis a pretie game, for tis not possible for him to lose that cutts the

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the cardes: I warrant the other that shuffles may loose
Saint Peters cope if he had it. Wel, Ile carrie this home
with me into the cuntrie, and win many a pot of ale with
it. A fresh pint, sayth the Verser, and then wele away: but
seeing sir, you are going homeward, Ile learne you a trick
worth the noting, that you shall win many a pot with in
the winter nights: with that he culls out the four knaues,
& prickes one in the top, one in the midst, and one in the
bottome. Now sir, saith he, you see these thre knaues ap-
parantly, thrust them downe with your hand, & cut where
you will, & though they be so far asunder, Ile make them
all come together. I praise you lets see that trick, sayth the
connie, me thinkes it should be impossible. So the Verser
drawes, and all the thre knaues comes in one heap: this
he doth once or twice, then the connie wonders at it, and
offers him a pint of wine to teach it him. Nay, saith the
verser, Ile do it for thanks, and therfore marke me where
you haue taken out the four knaues, lay two together a-
boue, and draw vp one of them that it may be seene, then
pricke the other in the midst, & the third in the bottome, so
when any cuts, cut he neuer so warily, thre knaues must
of force come together, for the bottom knaue is cut to lie
vpon both the vpper knaues. I marrie, saith the setter, but
then the 3. knaues you shewd come not together. Truth
saith the verser, but one among a thousand marke not y,
it requires a quick eie, a sharp wit, and a reaching head to
spy at the first. Now gra mercie sir for this trick, saith the
connie, Ile dominere with this amongst my neibors. Thus
both the verser and the setter feine friendship to the conie
offering him no shew of colnage, nor once to draw him in
for a pint of wine, y more to shadow their vilany, but now
begins the sporte: as thus they sit tipling, comes the Bar-
nacle and thrusts open the dooze, looking into the roome
where they are, and as one bashfull steppeth back againe,
and saith, I crie you mercie gentlemen, I thought a friend
of mine had bin here, pardon my boldnes. No harme saith
the

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the Verser, I praie you drinke a cup of wine with vs and welcome: so in comes the Barnacle, and taking the cup drinkes to the Connie, and then saith, what at cards gentlemen? were it not I should be offensive to the company I would play for a pint till my friend come that I looke for. Why sir, saith the Verser, if you will sit downe you shalbe taken vp for a quart of wine. With all my heart, saith the Barnacle, what will you play at, at Primero, Primo vistro, Sant, one and thirtie, new cut, or what shal be the game? Sir, saith the verser, I am but an ignorant man at cards, & I see you haue them at your fingers end, I will play with you at a game wherein can be no deceit, it is called mum-chance at cards, and it is thus: you shall shuffle the cards, and I will cut, you shal cal one, and this honest countrie yoman shal call a card for me, and which of our cards comes first shal win: here you see is no deceit, and this I le play. No truly, saith the Connie, me thinkes there can be no great craft in this: well saith the barnacle, for a pint of wine haue at you: so they play as before, five vp. and the verser wins. This is hard luck, sayth the Barnacle, and I beleue the honest man spies some card in the bottom, and therfore I le make this, alwaies to prick the bottom card: content saith the verser, and the Connie to cloak the matter, saith: sir, you offer me iniury to think that I can call a card, when I neither touch them, shuffle, cut, nor draw them: Ah sir, saith the barnacle, giue losers leaue to speak: wel, to it they go againe, and then the barnacle knowing the game best, by chopping a card winnes two of the five, but lets the verser win the set, then in a chafe he sweareth tis but his ill luck, and he can see no deceit in it, and therefore he wil play xii. d. a cut. The verser is content, & wins ii. or iii. s. of the barnacle, whereat hee chafes, and saith, I came hether in an ill houre: but I will win my monie again, or lose al in my purse: with that he draws out a purie with some three or four pound, & claps it on the boord: the verser aseth the conie secretly by signes if

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If he will be his halfe, he saies I, and straight seeks for his
purse: well, the barnacle shuffles the cards thoroughly, and
the verser cuts as befoze, the Barnacle when he hath dra-
wen one card, saith, Ile either win something or lose some-
thing, therfoze Ile vie and reueie every card at my pleasure,
till either yours or mine come out, and therfoze twelue
pence vpon this card, my card comes first for twelue pence:
no saith the Verser, I saith the Connie, and I durst holde
twelue pence moze, why, I holde you, saith the Barnacle,
and so they vie and reueie till some ten shillings bee on the
stake: and then next comes forth the versers card, that the
Connie called, and so the Barnacle loseth: wel, this fleshy-
eth the Conny, the sweetnes of gaine maketh him frolike,
and no man is moze readie to vie and reueie then he. Thus
for thzee or foure times the barnacle loseth, at last to whet
on the Connie, he striketh his chopt card, and winneth a
good stake. Alwaie with the witch, cries the Barnacle, I
hope the cards will turne at last. I much, thinketh the con-
nie, twas but a chance that you askt so right, to aske one of
the five that was cut off, I am sure there was forty to one
on my side, and Ile haue you on the lurch anone, so still they
vie and reueie, and for once that the barnacle winnes, the
conie gets five, at last when they meane to shauie the conie
cleane of all his coine, the barnacke chafeth, and vppon a
pawne borroweth some monie of the Tapster, & sweares
he wil vie it to the vttermost, then thus he chops his card
to crof-bite the conie. he first lookes on the bottome card,
and shuffles often, but still keeping that bottome Carde,
which he knowes to be vppermost, then sets he downe the
cards, and the Verser to encourage the Connie, cut of but
thzee cards, whereof the barnacles card must needs be the
vppermost, then shewes he the bottome carde of the other
heape cut off to the conie, and sets it vpon the barnacles
card which he knowes, so that offoze the carde that was
laide vppermost, must come forth first, and then the bar-
nacle calles that carde: they drawe a carde, and then the

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Barnacle vies, and the countreiman vies vpon him: for this is the law, as often as one vies or reuies, the other must see it, els he loseth the stake: wel, at last the barnacle plies it so, that perhaps he vies more money then the cony hath in his purse. The cony vpon this, knowing his card is the third or fourth card, and that hee hath forty to one against the Barnacle, pawnes his rings if hee haue any, his sword, his cloke, or els what hee hath about him, to maintaine the vie, and when he laughs in his sleeue, thinking he hath best the barnacle of all, then the barnacles card comes forth, and strikes such a cold humour vnto his heart, that hee sits as a man in a traunce, not knowing what to doe, and sighing while his hart is redy to breake, thinking on the money that he hath lost, perhaps the man is very simple and patient, and whatsoeuer he thinks, so feare goes his way quiet with his losse, while the conny-catchers laugh and deuide the spoyle, and being out of the doores, poore man, goes to his lodging with a heauy hart, penurie & sorrowful, but too late, for perhaps his state did depend on that money, and so he, his wife, his children, and his familie, are brought to extream miserie. Another perhaps more hardy and subtil, smokes the cony-catchers, and smell eth colenage, and saith, they shal not haue his money so, but they answer him with braues, and though he bring them be fore an officer, yet the knaues are so fauored, that the man neuer recouers his money, and yet he is let slippe unpunished. Thus are the poore conies robbed by these base binded caterpillers: thus are seruicemen oft entised to play, and lose all: thus are prentises induced to be Connyes, and so are colened of their masters money, yea young gentlemen, merchants, and others, are seduced in by these damnable rakebells, a plague as ill as hell, which is, present losse of money, & ensuing miserie. A lamentable case in england, when such vipers are suffered to breed, and are not cut off with the sword of iustice. This enuomity is not onely in London, but now generally dispersed through all
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england in euery shire, city, and town of any receipt, and many complaints are heard of their egregious cosenage. The poore farmer simply going about his busines, or vnto his atturneys chamber, is catcht vpe & cosened of all. The seruing-man sent with his Lordes treasure, loseth oftentimes most part to these woꝝms of the commonwelth, the pꝛentice hauing his masters mony in charge, is spoiled by them, and from an honest seruant either driuen to run away, or to liue in discredit for euer. The gentleman loseth his land, the marchant his stock, and all to these abhominable conny-catchers, whose meanes is as ill as their liuing, for they are all either wedded to whores, or so addicted to whores, that what they get from honest men, they spend in bawdy houses among harlots, and consume it as vainly as they get it villanously. Their eares are of adamant, as pitiles as they are trecherous, for be the man neuer so poore, they wil not return him one peny of his los. I remember a merry iest done of late to a welchman, who being a mere stranger in Londo, and not wel acquainted with the English tongue, yet chaunced amongst certaine conny-catchers, who spying the gentleman to haue mony, they so dealt with him, that what by signes, and broken english, they got him in for a cony, and fleest him of euery peny that he had, and of his sword, at last the mā smoakt them, and dꝛew his dagger vpon them at Ludgate, for thereabouts they had catcht him, and would haue stabbe vne of them for his mony, people came and stopt him, and the rather became they could not vnderstand him, though he had a card in one hand, and his dagger in the other, and said as wel as he could, a card, a card, Mon dieu. In the meane while the conny-catchers were got into Paules, and so away. The welchman folowed them, seeking them there vp and down in the church stil with his naked dagger and the card in his hand, and the gentlemen marueld what he meant thereby, at last one of his countrymen met him, and enquired the cause of his choler, and then he told

him both he was cosened at cards, and robbed of all his money, but as his losse was voluntary, so his seeking them was meer vanity, for they were stept into some blind ale house to deuide the shares. Neere to S. Edmunds Burie in Suffolk, there dwelt an honest man a Shoemaker, that hauing some twenty markes in his purse, long a gathering, and neerly kept, came to the market to buy a dicker of hoes, and by chaunce fel among cony-catchers, whose names I omit, because I hope of their amendment. This plain countriman drawn in by these former deuises, was made a cony, and so straight stript of all his xx. marke, to his vtter vndoing: the knaues scapt, and he went home a sorrowful man. Shortly after, one of these cony-catchers was taken for a suspected person, and laid in Bury gaole, the sessions comming, and he produced to the bar, it was the fortune of this pooze Shoemaker to be there, who spying this roague to be arained, was glad, and said nothing vnto him, but lookt what would be the issue of his appearance, at the laste hee was brought befoze the Iustices, where he was examined of his life, and being demanded what occupation he was, said none, what profession then are you of, how liue you? Harry quoth he, I am a gentleman, and liue of my frends. Nay that is a lie quoth the pooze Shoemaker, vnder correction of the worshipful of the bench, you haue a trade, and are by your art a Cony-catcher. A cony-catcher said one of the Iustices, and smiled, what is he a warriner fellow, whose warren kepeth hee canst thou tel? Nay sir, your worship mistaketh me qd, the Shoemaker, he is not a wariner, but a conny-catcher: the bench, that neuer heard this name befoze, smilde, attributing the name to the mans simplicitie, thought he meant a warriner, which the Shoemaker spying, answered, that some conies this felow catcht, were worth twenty markes a peece, and for proof quoth he, I am one of them: and so discoursed the whole order of the art, and the basenes of the cosening; wherupon the Iustices looking into his life, appointed

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pointed him to be whipt, and the Shomaker desired that he might geue him his paiment, which was graunted: when he came to his punishment, the Shomaker laught, saying, tis a mad world when pooz conies are able to beate their catchers, but he lent him so frendly lashes, that almost he made him pay an ounce of blond for euery pounce of silver. Thus we see how the generation of these vipers increase, to the confusion of many honest men, whose practises to my poore power I haue discovered, and set out, with the villanous sleights they vse to intrap the simple, yet haue they clokes for the raine, and shadowes for their villanies, calling it by the name of art or law: as conny-catching art, or cony-catching law. And herof it riseth, y^e like as law, when the terme is truely considered, signifieth y^e ordinance of good men, established for the commonwelth, to repressse al vicious living, so these cony-catchers turne the cat in the pan, geuing to diuers vile patching shifts, an honest & godly title, calling it by the name of a law, because by a multitude of hateful rules, as it were in good learning, they exercise their villanies to the destruction of sundry honest persons. Whereupon they geue their false conueyance, the name of cony-catching law, as there be also other lawes: as high law, sacking lawe, sigging law, cheating law and barnards law. If you marvail at these miseries and queynt words, consider, as the Carpenter hath many termes familiar inough to his prentices, that other vnderstand not at al, so haue the cony-catchers not without great cause: for a falshood once detected, can neuer compass the desired effect. Therefore will I presently acquaint you with the signification of the termes in a Table. But leauing them til time and place. Coming downe Turnmil Street the other day, I met one whom I suspected a conycatcher, I drew him on to y^e tanern, and after a cup of wine or two, I talkt with him of the maner of his life, & told him I was sozry for his friends sake, y^e he took so

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bad a course, as to liue vpon the spoile of poore men, and specially to deserue the name of cony-catching, dissuading him from that base kind of life, that was so ignominious in the world, and so lothsome in the sight of God. But sir, quoth he, calling me by my name, as my religion is small, so my deuotion is lesse, I leaue God to be disputed on by diuines, the two ends I aime at, are gaine and ease, but by what honest gaines I may get, neuer comes within the compasse of my thoughts. Though your experience in traualle be great, yet in home matters mine be more, yea, I am sure you are not so ignorant, but you know that few men can liue vp-rightly, vnlesse hee haue some pretty way more then the world is witnes to, to helpe him withall: I think you some lawyers could be such purchasers, if all their pleas were short, and their proceedings iustice and conscience: that offices would be so dearely bought, and the buiers so sone enriched, if they counted not pilage an honest kind of purchase: or doe you think that men of handie trades make all their commodities without falshood, when so many of them are become daily purchasers: nay what wil you more, who so hath not some sinister way to help himselfe, but followeth his nose alwaies straight forward, may wel hold vp the head for a yeare or two, but the third he must needs sink, and gather the wind into beggers haue, therfore sir, cease to perswade me to the contrarie, for my resolution is to beat my wits, and spare not to busie my braines to saue and help me, by what meanes soeuer I care not, so I may auoid the danger of the lawe: wherupon, seeing this cony-catcher resolved in his forme of life, leauing him to his lewdnes I went away, wondering at the basenes of their minds, that would spend their time in such detestable sort. But no maruell, for they are geuen vp into a reprobate sence, and are in religion mere atheists, as they are in trade flat dissemblers, if I should spend many sheets in deciphering their shifts, it were fruitelous, in that they be many, and full of variety, for euery
day

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Day they invent new tricks, and such quaint devices as are secret, yet passing dangerous, that if a man had *Argus* eyes, he could scant pierce into the bottom of their practices. Thus for the benefit of my country I have briefly discovered the law of Conny-catching, desiring all Justices, if such coseners light in their precinct, even to use *summum ius* against them, because it is the basest of all villanies. And that London prentices, if they chance in such conny-catchers companie, may teach them London law, that is, to defend the poore men that are wronged, and learn the caterpillers the highway to Newgate, where if Wind favour them with the heaviest irons in all the house, & give the his unkindest entertainment, no doubt his other petty sinnes shall be halfe pardoned for his labour: but I woulde it might be their fortune to happen into Nobles Northward in white chappel, there in faith round Robin his deputie, would make them, like wretches, feel the waight of his heaviest fetters. And so desiring both honourable and worshipful, as well Justices, as other officers, and all estates from the prince to the beggar, to rest professed enemies to these baseminded conycatchers, I take my leave.

Nascimur pro patria.

A table of the words of art, vsed in the effecting
these base villanies.

Wherein is discovered the nature of euery terme, being proper to none but to the professors thereof.

1 High law	robbing by the highway side.
2 Backing law	lecherie.
3 Cheting law	play at false dice.
4 Cros-biting law	cosenage by whores.
5 Conycatching law	cosenage by cards.
6 Wersing law	cosenage by false gold.
7 Figgings law	cutting of purses, & picking of pockets.
8 Barnards law	a drunken cosenage by cards.

These

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These are the eight lawes of villanie, leading the high waie to infamie.

In high Lawe The Thiefe is called a High lawier,
He that setteth the Watch, a Scripper
He that standeth to watch, an Dake
He that is robbd the Martin
When he yeeleth, stouping

In Lacking Law The Bawd if it be a woman, a Pandar
The Bawd, if a man, an Apple squire
The whoore, a Commoditie
The whoore house, a Trugging place

In cheating law Pardon me Gentlemen for although no man could better then my selfe discover this lawe and his tearmes, and the name of their Cheats, Bardolice, Flats, Forgers, Langreys, Gourds, Demies, and many other, with their nature, & the crosses and contraries to them upon advantage, yet for some speciall reasons, herein I will be silent.

In Crof-biting lawe The whoore, the Traffique
The man that is brought in, the Simpler
The villaines that take them, the Crof-biters

In Coni-catch-ing law The partie that taketh vp the Connie, the Setter
He that playeth the game, the Uerler
He that is cooshed the Connie
He that comes in to them, the Barnackle
The monie that is wonne, Purchase

In Uerling law He that bringeth him in, the Uerler
The poore Countrie man, the Coosin
And the Drunkard that comes in, the Suttler

In Figging law The Cutpurse, a Rip
He that is halfe with him, the Snap
The knife, the Cuttle boung
The strike potall, a Pout
He that faceth the man, the State
Taking the purse, Drawing
Spying of him, Smoaking
The purse, the Bong
The monie, the Shels
The Act doing, Striking

In Barnards lawe. He that fetcheth the man, the Taker
He that is taken, the Coosin
The landed man the Uerler
The Drunken man the Barnard
And he that makes the fray, the Rutter:

Cum multis aliis qua nunc prescribere longum est.

These

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These quaint termes do these base arts vse to shadow
their villanie withall: for, *multa latent qua non patent*, ob-
scuring their filthie crafts with these faire colours, that
the ignorant may not espie what their subtiltie is: but
their end wil be like their beginning, hatcht with Cain,
and consumed with Iudas: and so bidding them adue to
the deuil, and you farewell to God, I end. And now to the
art of Cros-biting.

The art of Cros-biting.

The Cros-biting law is a publique profession of shame-
les colenage, mixt with incestuous whozedomes, as it
as was practised in Gomozha or Sodom, though not after
the same vnnatural manner: for the method of their mis-
chieuous art (with blushing chekes & trembling hart let it
be spoken) is, that these villanous vipers, vnworthy the
name of men, base roagues (yet why doe I tearme them so
well) being outcasts from God, vipers of the world, and an
excremental reuerſion of sin, doth consent, nay conſtrayne
their wiues to yeeld the vse of their bodieſ to other men,
that taking them together, he may cros-bite the party of
all the crownes he can presently make, and that the world
may ſee their monstrous practises, I wil briefly ſet downe
the manner.

They haue sundry praies that they cal simplers, which
the men fondly and wantonly geuen, whom for a penaltie
of their lust, they flerce of al that euer they haue: some mar-
chants, prentices, seruingmen, gentlemen, yeomen, far-
mers, and all degrees, and this is their forme: there are re-
ſident in London & the ſuburbes, certain men attired like
Gentlemen, braue fellowes, but basely minded, who liuing
in want, as their laſt refuge, ſal vnto this cros-biting law
and to maintein themſelues, either marry with ſome ſtale
whoze, or els forſooth keep one as their freed: and theſe per-
ſons be comonly men of the eight lawes befoze rehearſed:
either high Lawiers, Clergers, Paps, Conny-catchers, or
ſuch

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such of the like fraternitie. These when their other trades fail, as the Cheater, when he hath no cosin to grime with his stop dice, or y^e high lawier, when he hath no set match to ride about, and the Pip when there is no tearme, faire, nor time of great assemblie, then to maintaine the maine chance, they vse the benefite of their wiues or friends, to the cros-biting of such as lust after their filthie enozmities: some simple men are drawen on by subtil meanes, which neuer intended such a bad matter. In summer euenings, and in the winter nightes, these trafickes, these common truls I meane, walke abroad either in the fields or streetes that are commonly haunted, as stales to drawe men into hell, and a farre of, as attending applesquires, certaine cross-biters stand aloofe, as if they knew them not: now so many men so many affections. Some vn- ruly mates that place their content in lust, letting slippe the libertie of their eies on their painted faces, feede vpon their vncast beauties, till their hearts be set on fire: then come they to these minions, and court them with many sweet words: alas their loues needs no long lutes, for they are forthwith entertained, and either they go to the Ta- uerne to scale vp the match with a pottle of Ipcras, or straight she carries him to some bad place, and there picks his pocket, or else the Cross-biters comes swearing in, & so out-face the dismaied companion, that rather then see would be brought in question, he would disburse all that he hath present. But this is but an eade colnage. Some other meeting with one of that profession in the street, wil question if she will drinke with him a pint of wine, they trade is neuer to refuse, and if for manners they doe, it is but once: & then scarce shall they be warme in the roome, but in comes a terrible fellow, with a side haire & a feare- full beard, as though he were one of Polyphemus cut, & he comes frowning in & saith, what hast thou to doe base knaue, to carrie my sister or my wife to the tauern: by his owne you whoze, tis some of your companions, I wil haue you

you both before the Justice, Deputie, or Constable, to bee examined. The poore scrivingman, apprentise, farmer, or whatsoeuer he is, seeing such a terrible huffe snuffe, swearing with his dagger in his hand, is fearefull both of him and to be brought in trouble, and therfore speakes kindly and courteously vnto him, and desires him to be content he meant no harm. The whoze, that hath teares at command, fals a weeping, and cries him mercy. At this submission of them both he triumphs like a bragard, and will take no compassion: yet at last, through intreaty of other his companions comming in as strangers, hee is pacified with some forty shillings, and the poore man goes sorrowful away, sighing out that which Salomon hath in his proverbs, *A shameles woman hath hony in her lippes, and her throte as sweet as hony, her throte as soft as oyle: but the end of her is more bitter then Aloes, and her tongue is more sharp then a two edged sword, her feet go vnto death, and her steppes leade vnto hell.*

Again these truls when they haue got in a nonice, then straight they pick his purse, and then haue they their cros-biters redy, to whom they conuey the mony and so offer themselves to be searcht: but the poore man is so outfaced by these cros-biting Ruffians, that hee is glad to goe away content with his losse, yet are these easie practises. Might the Iustices send out spials in the night, they shold see how these street walkers willet in rich garded gowns, quaint periwigs, ruffs of the largest size, quarter and halfe deep, glorie richly with blew starch, their cheekes died with surfuling water, thus are they trickt vp, and either walke like stales vp and down the streets, or stande like the deuils *Siquis* at a tauern or alehouse, as if who shoulde say, if any be so minded to satisfie his filthie lust, to lende me his purse, and the deuil his soule, let him come in and be welcome. Now sir comes by a countrey farmer, walking from his inne to perform some busines, and seeing such a gorgeous damzell, hee wondzing at such a braue wench,

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stand staring her on the face, or perhappes doth but cast a glance, and bid her good speed, as plain simple swains have their lustie humors as well as others: the trull straight beginning her *exordium* with a smile, saith: how now my friend, what want you, would you speake with anie body here? If the felow haue anie bolde spirit, perhaps he will offer the wine, & then he is caught, tis inough: in he goes, and they are chamberd: then sends she for her husband, or hir friend, and there either the farmers pocket is stript, or else the cross-biters fall vpon him, and threaten him with bzi dewill and the law: then for feare he giues them all in his purse, and makes them some bill to paie a summe of mokie at a certaine daie. If the pooze farmer bee bashfull, and passeth by one of these shamelesse strumpets, then will she berse it with him, and claime acquaintaunce of him, and by some pollicie or other fall aboord on him, and carrie him into some house or other: if he but enter in at the doores with her (though the pooze farmer neuer kille her) yet then the cross-biters, like vultures, will pray vpon his purse, and rob him of euerie pennie. If there bee anie yong gentleman that is a nouice and hath not seene they traines, to him will some common filth (that neuer knew loue) faine an ardent and honest affection, till she and her cross-biters haue berst him to the beggers estate. Ah gentlemen, marchants, yeomen and farmers, let this to you all, and to euery degre else, be a caueat to warn you from lust, that your inordinate desire be not a meane to impoverish your purses, discredit your good names, condemne your soules, but also that your wealth got with the sweat of your browes, or left by your parents as a patrimonie, shall be a pzaie to those cooling cross-biters. Some fond men are so farre in with these detestable trugs, that they consume what they haue vpon them, and find nothing but a Neapolitan fauor for their laboꝝ. Reade the seuenth of Salomons pꝛouerbs, and there at large view the description of a shameles and impudent curtizan: yet is there an
other

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other kind of cros-biting which is most pestilent, and that
is this. There liues about this towne certaine houshol-
ders, yet mere shifters and roolners, who learning some
insight in the ciuill law, walke abroad like paratoys, sum-
ners and infoymers, beeing none at all either in office or
credit, and they go spying about where any marchant, or
marchants prentise, citizen, wealthie farmer, or other of
credit, either accompany with anie woman familiarly, or
else hath gotten some maide with child, as mens natures
be prone to sin, straight they come ouer his fallows thus:
they send for him to a tauerne, & ther open the matter vnto
him, which they haue cunningly larned out, telling him
he must be presented to the Arches, & the scitation shalbe
peremptorily serued in his parish church. The partie as-
fraid to haue his credit crackt with the worshopfull of the
Citie, and the rest of his neighbors, & grieuing highly his
wife should heare of it, straight takes composition with
this cosner for some twentie markes, nay I heard of forty
pound cros-bitten at one time, & the the cosning infoymier
or cros-biter promisseth to wipe him out of the booke, & dis-
charge him from the matter, when it was neither know-
en nor presented: so go they to the woman, and fetch her
off if she be married, and though they haue this grosse sum
yet oft times they cros-bite hir for more: nay thus do they
feare citizens, prentises & farmers, that they find but any
space suspicious of the like fault. The cros-biting bands,
for no better. And I tearme them, in that for lucre they
conceale the sin, and smother vp lust, do not onely enrich
themselves mightily thereby, but also discredite, hinder,
and preiudice the court of the Arches, and the Officers
belonging to the same. There are some poore blinde patch-
es of that facultie, that haue their Tenements purchased,
and their plate on the boorde berie solemnly, who onely
get their gaines by cros-biting, as is afore rehearsed. But
leauing them to the deepe insight of such as be appointed
with iustice to correct vice, againe to the crue of my for-

The Art of Crof-biting.

mer crof-biters, whose fee simple to live bypon, is nothing but the folowing of common, dishonest and idle truls, and thereby maintain themselves by aue, and the strumpets in handsome furniture. And to end this art with an English demonstration, ile tel you a pretie tale of late perfozmd, in bishopsgate street, there was there five traffiques, pretty, but common huswiues, that stood fast by a tauern doze, looking if some pray would passe by for their purpose, anone the eldest of them, and most expericenced in that law, called Mal B. spied a master of a ship comming along: here is a simpler quoth she, Ile verse him, or hang me. Sir, sayde she, God euen, what, are you so liberal to bestow on three good wenches that are drie, a pint of wine. In faith, faire women qd. he, I was neuer nigard for so much, and with that he takes ons of them by the hand, and caries them all into the tauern, there he bestowed cheare and ipocras upon them, drincking hard til the shot came to a noble, so that they iii. carousing to the gentleman, made him somewhat tipsy, and then *¶ Venus in vinis, ignis in igne fuit*, wel, night grew on, and hee would away, but this mistres Mal B. stoopt his iozney thus, gentleman, qd. she, this undeserued fauor of yours makes vs so deeplie beholding to you, that our abilitie is not able any way to make sufficient satisfaction, yet to shew vs kind in what we can, you shall not deny me this request, to see my simple house befoze you go. The gentleman a litle whitled, consented, & went with them, so the shot was paid, & away they goe: Without the tauern doze stood two of their husbands, J B. & J K. and they weee made priuy to the practise. Home goes the gentleman with these lusty huswiues, stumbling, at laste hee was welcome to M. Mals house, and one of the three went into a chamber, and got to bed, whose name was A. B. after they had chatted a while, the gentleman would haue been gone, but she told him that befoze he went, hee shoulde see al the rooms of her house, and so ledde him by into the chamber where the party lay in bed: who is here saide the
Gen-

Gentleman, Marie saith Hal, a good pretie wench sir, and if you be not well, lie do lone by her, you can take no harm of her: Drunkennes desires lust, and so the Gentleman begins to dallie, and a waie goes she with the candle, and at last he put of his clothes and went to bed: yet he was not so Dronke, but he could after a while remember his mony, and feeling for his purse all was gone, and three linkes of his whistle broken off: the sum that was in his purse was in gold and silver twentie nobles. As thus hee was in a maze, though his head were well laden, in comes J. B. the good man of the house, and two other with him, and speaking somewhat loud, peace husband quoth she, there is one in bed, speak not so loud. In bed, saith he, gogs nownes ile go see, and so will J, saith the other: you shall not saith his wife, but stroue against him, but up goes he and his crosse-biters with him, & seeing the Gentleman in bed, out with his dagger, and asked what base villain it was that there sought to dishonnest his wife: well, he sent one of them for a constable, and made the gentleman rise, who halfe Dronk yet had that remembrance to speake faire, and to intreate him to keep his credit: but no intreatie could serue, but to the Counter he must, & the Constable must be sent for: yet at the last one of them intreated that the gentleman might be honestly used, and caried to a Tauerne to talke of the matter till a constable come. Tut, saith J. B. I wil haue law upon him: but the base crosse-biter at last stoopt, and to the Tauerne they go, where the Gentleman laide his whistle to paone for mony, & there bestowed as much of them as came to ten quillings, and sate Drinking and talking untill the next morrow. By that the Gentleman had stolne a nap, and waking it was daie light, and then seeing himselfe compassed with these crosse-biters, and remembering his nights worke, soberly smiling, asked them if they knew what he was: they answered, not wel. Why then quoth he, you base coosning rogues, you shall ere we part: and with that drawing his sword, kept them into the chamber, desiring that the constable might be sent for: but
this

The Art of Cros-biting.

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this braue of his could not dismay M. Mall, for he was
bidden a sharper byunt befoze, witnes the time of her
martirdome, when vpon her shoulders was engrauen the
histrozy of her whorish qualities: but she replying, swoze,
sith he was so lusty, her husband should not put it vp by no
meanes. I will tel thee thou base cros-biting baud, quoth
he, and you coosening companions, I serue a noble man, &
for my credit with him, I refer me to the penaltie hee will
impose on you, for by God I wil make you an example to
all cros-biters ere I ende with you, I tel you villaines, I
serue, and with that he namde his Lord. When the guilty
whozes and coseners heard of his credite and seruice, they
began humbly to intreat him to be good to the: then quoth
he, first deliuer me my mony, they vpon that gladly gaue
him all, and restozed the linkes of his chaine. When hee
had all, he smiled, and sware afresh that he would torment
them for al this, that the seueritie of their punishment
might be a caueat to others to beware of the like coose-
nage: and vppon that knockt with his foote, and sayde hee
would not let them go til he had a constable. When in ge-
neral they humbled themselues, so recompencing the par-
tie, that he agreed to passe ouer the matter, conditionallie
beside, that they would pay the sixtene shillings hee had
spent in charges, which they also perfozmed. The Gentle-
man kept his way, and said, you may see the olde prouerbs
fulfilled, *Fallere fallentem non est fraus*. Thus haue I de-
ciphered an odious practise not worthy to be named: and
now wishing al, of what estate soeuer, to beware of filthy
lust, and such damnable stales as drawes men on to inor-
dinate desires, and rather to spend their coine amongst
honest companie, then to bequeath it to such base cros-bi-
ters, as prais vpon men, like rauen vpon dead carcases,
I end with this prater, that Cros-biting and Conny-cat-
ching may be as little known in England, as the eating
of swines flesh was amongst the Jewes. Farewel.

Nascimur pro patria.

FINIS.

PLEASANT DISCOVERY OF

the coofenage of Colliers.

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Although (courteous Readers) I did not put in amongst the lawes of co-fening, the law of *legering*, which is a deceit wherewith colliers abuse the commonwelth, in hauing vnlawful sacks, yet take it for a pettie kinde of craft or mystery, as preiudicial to the poore, as any of the other two. for I omitted diuers other diuelish vices, as the nature of the *lift*, the *black art*, & the *curbing law*, which is the *filchers* and *theeues* that come into houses or shops, & lift away any thing: or pick locks, or hookers at windowes, thogh they be as *species* and branches to the table before rehearsed. But leauing them, again to our law of *legering*. Know therefore, that there be inhabiting in & about *London*, certaine caterpillers (colliers I should say) that terme theselues (among themselues) by the name of *legers* who for that the honorable the L. Maior of the citie of *London*, & his officers, looke straitly to the measuring of coales, doe (to preuent the execution of his iustice,) ~~themselues~~ themselves in & about the suburbs of *London*, as *Shorditch*, *White-chappel*, *Southwark*, & such places, and there they haue a house or yard, that hath a back gate, because it is the more conuenient for their co-fening purpose, and the reason is this, the *Leger*, the crafty collier I meane, riseth very early in the morning, and either goeth towardes *Croyden*, *Whetstone*, *Greenwitch* or *Romford*, and there meeteth the country Colliers, who bring coles to serue the markette: there, in a forestalling manner, this *leger* bargayneth

with

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with the Countrie Collier for his coales, and payeth
for them nineteene shillings or twentie at the most,
but commonly fifteene and sixteene, and there is in
the load 36. sackes : so that they paie for euerie cou-
ple about fourteene pence. Now hauing bought his
coales, euerie sacke containing full foure bushels, he
carrieth the Countrie Collier home to his legering
place, and there at the backe gate causeth him to vn-
load, and as they saie, shoot the coales downe . As
soone as the Countrie Collier hath dispatcht and is
gone, then the Leger who hath three or foure hired
men vnder him, bringeth forth his own sacks, which
be long & narrow, holding at the most not three bu-
shels, so that they gaine in the change of euerie sacke
a bushell for their pains. Tush, yet this were somewhat
to be borne withal, although the gaine is monstrous,
but this sufficeth not, for they fill not these sackes full
by far, but put into them some two bushels & a halfe,
laying in the mouth of the sacke certaine great coles,
which they call fillers, to make the sack shew faire, al-
though the rest be small wilow coles, and halfe dros.
Whē they haue thus not filled their sacks, but thrust
coles into the, that which they lay vppermost, is best
filled, to make the greater shew : then a tall turdie
knaue, that is all ragd, and durtie on his legs, as thogh
he came out of the Countrie (for they durtie theyr
hose and shoos on purpose to make themselves seem
countrie colliers :) Thus with two sacks a peece they
either go out at the back gate, or steal out at the street
side, and so go vp and downe the suburbs, & sel their
coales in summer for fourteene and sixteene pence a
couple, and in winter for eighteene or twentie. The
poore

poore cookes & other citizens that buy them, thinke they be countrie colliers, that haue left some coles of their load, and would gladly haue monie, supposing (as the statute is) they be good and lawfull sackes, are thus coofned by the legers, & haue but two bushels and a halfe for foure bushels, and yet are extreamlie rackt in the price, which is not onely a great hinderance to her Maiesties poore cōmons, but greatly prejudiciall to the master Colliers, that bring true sacks & measure out of the countrie. Then consider (gentle reades) what a kind of coofnage these legers vse, that make of thirty sacks some 56, which I haue seen, for I haue set powne with my pen how many turnes they haue made of a load, and they make 28. euerie turne being two sacks, so that they haue got an intolerable gains by their false measure. I coul'd not be silent seeing this abuse, but thought to reueal it for my countries commoditie, and to giue light to the worshipfull Iustices, and other her Maiesties officers in Middlesex, Surrey, and els where, to looke to such a grosse coofnage, as contrarie to a direct statute, doth defraud & impouerish her Maiesties pore cōmmons. Well may the honorable and worshipful of London florish, who carefully looke to the countrie coales, & if they finde not 4. bushels in euerie sacke, do sell the to the poore as forfeit, & distribut the mony to them that haue need, burning the sacke, & honoring or rather dishonoring the pillerie with the Colliers durty faces: & wel may the honorable & worshipfull of the suburbs prosper, if they loke in iustice to these legers who deserue more punishment than the statute appoints for them, which is whipping at a carts taile, or with fauor the pillerie.

For fewell or firing being a thing necessary in a common wealth, and charcole vsed more then any other, the poore not able to buy by the load, are faine to get in their fire by the sacke, & so are greatly coosned by the retaile. Seeing therefore the carefull lawes her Maiestie hath appointed for the wealth of her commons, and succor of the poore, I would humbly entreat all her Maiesties officers, to looke into the life of these legers, and to root them out, that the pore feele not the burden of their incōscionable gaines. I heard with my eares a pore woman of Shorditch, who had bought coles of a leger, with weeping teares cōplain and raile against him in the streete, in her rough eloquence calling him coosning knaue, & saying, tis no maruell, villain (quoth she) if men compare you colliers to the deuill, seeing your consciences are worser then the deuilles, for hee takes none but those souls whom God hates : and you vndo the poore whome God loues.

What is the matter good wife (quoth I) that you vse such inuectiue words against the collier: a collier sir (saith she) he is a theefe and a robber of the common people. Ile tell you sir, I bought of a Countie collier two sackes for thirteene pence. & I bought of this knaue three sackes, which cost me 22. pence: and sir, when I measured both their sackes, I had more in the two sackes by three pecks, then I had in the three. I would (quoth she) the Iustices woulde looke into this abuse, and that my neighbors would ioyne with me in a supplication, and by God I would kneele before the Queene, and intreate that such coosning Colliers might not onelie bee punished with the

bare

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bare pillerie, (for they haue such blacke faces, that no man knowes them again, and so are they careles) but that they might leaue their eares behinde them for a forget: & if that would not mend them, that *Bul* with a faire halter might roote them out of the world, that liue in the world by such grosse and dishonest coofnage. The collier hearing this, went smiling awaie, because he knew his life was not lokt into, & the woman wept for anger that she had not some one by that might with iustice reuenge her quarell. There be also certaine Colliers that bring coles to London in Barges, and they be called Gripers, to these comes the leger, & bargens with him for his coles, & sels by retaile with the like cofnage of sackes as I rehearsed before. But these mad Legers (not content with this monstrous gaine) do besides mix among their other sacks of coales, store of shruffe dust and small cole, to their great aduantage. And for prooffe hereof, I will recite you a matter of truth, lately performed by a Cookes wife vpon a coofning Collier.

*How a Cookes wife in London did lately serue a Collier
for his coofnage.*



IT chanced this Summer that a load of coles came forth of Kent to Billingsgate, and a Leger bought them, who thinking to deceiue the Citizens, as he did those in the suburbs, furnisht himselfe with a couple of sackes, and comes vp Saint Marie hill to sell them: a Cookes wife bargained with the collier and bought his coales, and they agreed vppon foureteene pence for the couple: which beeing done, hee carried the coales into the house and shot them: and when

*the wife sawe them, and perceiuing there was scarce
fiue bushels for eight, she cals a little girle to her, and
bad her go for the Constable: for thou coofening
rogue, quoth she, (speaking to the collier) I wil teach
thee how thou shalt coofen me with thy false sacks,
whatsoeuer thou doest to others, and I wil haue thee
before my Lord Maior: with that she caught a spit in
her hand, and swore if he offered to stir, shee would
therewith broach him; at which words the Collier
was amazed, and the feare of the pillerie put him in
such a frighr, that he said he would go to his boat, &
returne againe to answer whatsoeuer she durst ob-
iect against him, and for pledge heereof (quoth the
Collier) keepe my sackes, your mony, and the coales
also. Wherupon the womon let him go, but as soone
as the collier was out of doores, it was needles to bid
him runne, for downe he gets to his boate, & awaie
he thrusts from Billingsgate, and so immediatly went
downe to Wapping, and ueuer after durst returne to
the Cookes wife to demand either monie, sackes or
coales.*

*How a Flaxewife and her neighbours used a coof-
ning Collier.*

Now Gentlemen by your leaue, and heare a mery iest:
There was in the suburbes of London a Flaxe wife
that wanted coles, and seeing a leger come by with
a couple of sackes, that had before deceiued her in like sorte,
cheaped, bargained & bought them, & so went in with her
to shoote them in her colehouse. As soone as she saw her coles
she easily gest there was scarce sixe bushels, yet dissembling
the matter, she paid him for the, and bad him bring her two
sackes

Sacks more: the Collier went his waie, & in the mean time the flax wife measured the coles, and there was iust fve bushels and a peck. Hereupon she cald to her neighbours, being a companie of women, that before time had also bene pincht in their coles, and shewed them the cosnage, & desired their aide to her in tormenting the Collier, which they promist to performe, & thus it fell out. She conueied them into a back roome (some sixteen of them) euerie one hauing a good cudgell vnder her apron, straight comes the Collier, and saith, Mistres, here be your coles: welcome good Collier, quoth she, I praie thee follow me into the backside, & shoot them in an other roome. The Collier was content, and went with her. but as soone as he was in, the good wife lockt the doore, and the Collier seeing such a troupe of wiues in the roome, was amazed, yet said, God speed you all shrews, welcome quoth one iolly Dame, being appointed by them all to giue sentence against him: who so soone as the collier had shot his sacks, said Sirrha collier, know that we are here all assembled as a grad Iurie, to determine of thy villanies, for selling vs false sacks of coales, & know that thou art here indited vpon cosnage, therefore hold up thy hand at the bar, & ether saie, guiltie, or not guiltie, and by whom thou wilt be tried, for thou must receiue condigne punishment for the same ere thou depart. The Collier who thought they had but iested, smiled & said Come on, which of you shall be my Iudge? Marry, quoth one iolly Dame, that is I, and by God you knaue, you shall finde I will pronounce sentence against you feuerely, if you be founde guiltie. When the Collier sawe they were in earnest, he said, Come, come, open the doore, and let me go: with that fve or six started up, and fell vpon the Collier, and gaue vnto him halfe a score of sound lambeakes with their cudgels, and bad him speake more reuerently to their Principall.

The

